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SUBJECT: CONTESTED TRIBAL CHIEF SUCCESSION LEADS TO ETHNIC
VIOLENCE, COP KILLERS, AND CROSS-BORDER IDPS

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The killings last week of 47 policemen in Equateur Province stemmed from an intra-tribal argument between competing clans' candidates for tribal chieftain. Since then, some 16,000 refugees who fear continued ethnic violence or reprisals by the national police have fled into Congo-Brazzaville and other areas in the DRC. The GDRC remains conspicuously silent on their response raising fears of police brutality in quelling the conflict. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

¶2. (U) The district government of Gemena, South Ubangi District, Equateur Province, recognized a member of the Banzaya clan as interim tribal chief in Dongo, a village 230 km from Gemena. The Enyele clan, a constituent of the same tribe opposed the GDRC-recognized chieftain who fled the area after fighting broke out. Members of the Congolese National Police (NPC) escorted the duly-recognized chieftain back to his tribe. In response to the chieftain's return with armed policemen, an Enyele and former FARDC captain, Nyamuka Ebele, led Enyele clan members in armed combat killing 47 policemen on October 29. (Comment: While the Enyele-Banzaya conflict reportedly dates to 1946, some sources say Enyele combatants included demobilized youth who were demoralized at poor prospects after civilian reintegration. End Comment.)

¶3. (U) Non-combatants fled the area fearing continued ethnic violence or police reprisals. Interim Administrator Bienvenu Longi told UN Radio Okapi that refugees fled to Langi, Republic of Congo; and other South Ubangi cities of Libenga and Kungu. The Enyele clan kept control of Dongo and began a march toward Kungu.

¶4. (U) South Ubangi District Deputy Commissioner Willy Isekusu called in NPC reinforcements and Kinshasa deployed the elite Rapid Intervention Police (PIR) who flew to Gemena on November 1 to join mobilized NPC forces. The GDRC has maintained silence regarding subsequent actions taken, results achieved, and casualties on either side.

RESPONSES BY MONUC and GDRC

¶5. (SBU) On November 3, South Ubangi District Commissioner Jean-Baptiste Lumbwe, called for negotiations and sent a delegation to Dongo to meet with local leaders including the juju priest Udjain. UN Head of Office in Equateur Province capital Mbandaka, Guriane Ndiaye, and Acting Governor Bienda went to Gemena to diffuse the situation. Another GDRC mission is reportedly en route.

¶6. (SBU) Fearing reprisals by the NPC and PIR for the

deaths of 47 officers, MONUC deployed military observers on November 4. The observers failed in an overland approach from Gemena due to bad roads, and are attempting a river barge movement and considering a helicopter mission.

[17](#). (SBU) Comment: Already under international pressure for alleged atrocities by government forces in eastern DRC, the lack of public statements by GDRC authorities causes Post to fear new human rights violations in the northwestern DRC. End Comment.
GARVELINK